

A 225/24 N.1.
S E R M O N

PREACH'D at

Newport - Pagnel,

IN THE

County of BUCKS,

On *Sept.* 15. 1725.

Upon Occasion of the

ORDINATION

O F

Mr. *WILLIAM HUNT.*

By Mr. *JABEZ EARLE.*

With a CHARGE given to the said Mr. *William Hunt*, after his ORDINATION: by *Edmund Calamy, D. D.*

And a suitable EXHORTATION to the People, upon that solemn Occasion: By Mr. *John Troughton* of *Bicester*, in the County of *Oxon.*

L O N D O N: Ⓜ

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IN THE

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ON SUNDAY, 17th

of October, 1854.

ORDINATION

OF

MR. WILLIAM HUNT.



By Mr. J. C. ...

With a CHARGE, &c. to the said Mr. Hunt, by the
Assembly, &c. by the ...
Clergy, D.D.

And a ... Exposition to the ...
upon the ...
of the ... in the County of ...

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MATTH. xxiii. 9.

And call no man father upon the earth.



T would, I think, be very much to the interest of Christianity, if the professors of it would have a greater regard to the plain declarations of *His Gospel* who is *the author and finisher of our faith*, and the *apostle and highpriest of our profession*, and less to human subtilties and the determination of fallible guides. For it appears, that a great deal of Mischief has been done by authoritatively settling *schemes* to clear real difficulties, and making *canons* to supply pretended defects. It would be indeed a most desirable thing to have a scheme of truths incumbered with no difficulties, and a rule for worshipping Societies to walk by attended with no inconveniencies. But whether either be attainable in this imperfect state, I am not to determine. Only this I think a man may modestly say, that the end is not to be reach'd by either human learning or human policy. Instead of a perfect harmony in our confessions, and exact uniformity in our worship, we must, I doubt, be content, (at least till another dispensation commences,) with that state of things which would be introduced,

troduced, if Christians were generally more modest in their opinions, and more charitable in their censures: If they would take the liberty of judging for themselves in the best manner they can, and leave others the same: If every man would enjoy the truth he thinks himself in possession of without disturbing the property of others, whilst all profess to find their respective treasure in the common Gospel; and not by violent explications or authoritative decisions discharge (in a manner) one set of divine truths for the sake of another. The case among Christians has been too long thus. This, saith one, is a plain truth, or a necessary rule, and therefore whatever seems to contradict it must be explain'd in conformity to it. He that is in an opposite scheme, supports it in the same method; and so the Scripture is wrested, instead of being obey'd. And the natural tendency of this hopeful management is either persecution or infidelity. Whereas we should take every truth, which is plainly and professedly declar'd in Scripture, as a matter of faith, and every Scripture canon as a rule to walk by: And if after all our searches there remains a difficulty in adjusting the consistency of things, we have no more to do, that I know of, but in the exercise of humility and charity to wait for further light; and instead of throwing up one point of revelation, because we cannot yet discern, to our satisfaction, its consistence with another, we should remember that we are learners, and that in a low class too, and that when Christ our great master shall come, *He will teach us all things*, which we shall need or wish to know, and set difficult matters in such a light, as I think we are directed to expect, if we take in the proper sense of that text, 1 Cor. xiii. 11. *When I was a child, &c.*

These general hints will lead you into my present design; in prosecution of which I shall consider the words of my text.

In the first verse of this chapter we are informed, that our Lord directed his discourse *to the multitude, and to his disciples*; and each of them had a concern in the whole of it. If the multitude were to *observe and do* whatever the *scribes and pharisees* directed agreeably to the Word of God by *Moses*, tho' they themselves did not live as they taught, but *did all their works to be seen of men*, v. 5. This was a sufficient intimation to the disciples that their conduct was to be different, and that they should practise what they preach'd, and not make their own honour the end of their ministry, but the glory of God in the salvation of souls. And if the apostles were not to affect domination, or lord it over peoples faith; this plainly shews, that the people ought not to abet or encourage such usurpation. So that the sense of this text is of general concern to ministers and people too. Both will have their share in the guilt and damage of not attending to it. In the *guilt*, I say; for the people must fail in their duty, before the minister can accomplish his usurpation. A haughty *pharisee* cannot gain his point without a stupid *following*. And 'tis evident enough they must all share in the *damage*, tho' the artful leader may *have the greater sin*, and so fall under the forer condemnation.

The *method* I propose in discoursing upon the words I have read is,

I. To consider, what it is which Christ here forbids.

II. Account for mens giving in to such a practice.

III. Represent the evil of it. And

IV. Make some short application.

I. To

I. To consider what it is which Christ here forbids.

1. Not the *respectful* acknowledgment of an *earthly parent*. This is evident from the scope of his discourse; which is to direct men in their regard to such, whose business it was to instruct them concerning the mind and will of God, and to regulate the conduct of such as were appointed to that office, trust or employment. Every thing which our Lord here delivers, is perfectly foreign to the subject of reverence due to natural parents. The law which was given in that matter he came to fulfil, and did it not only by his own example, *Luke ii. 51.* but by vindicating it from the corrupt glosses of the *scribes* and *pharisees* in the 15th chapter of this Gospel, who, as it is *v. 6.* *made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions.*

2. Nor does he here forbid a *humble submission to the instruction of regular teachers*. This would have been to contradict what he had just before directed. They sit in *Moses seat*; therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, *v. 2, 3.* Besides, it is evident to common reason, that if there were any persons obliged to teach, there must have been an obligation upon others to hear, or in his own words, to *observe and do*. Therefore when He first sent forth his twelve apostles, and bid them *preach, and say, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Matth. x. 7.* He adds, *v. 14, 15.* *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, ——— it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.* And when he enlarged their commission, and sent them to *teach all nations*; those who were taught, were to *observe*, under the penalty of damnation, *Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. Mark xvi. 16.* And that for this good reason, *Luke x. 16.* *He that heareth you, heareth me;*

me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. To which may be added, that the promise of his presence with his ministers shews what he expects from the people. And as this presence of his is engag'd to the end of the world, it is evident enough, that neither the work of the ministry, nor the obligation of men to regard it, was limited to the time of the first dispensers of the Gospel. For this presence they had, not only till the subversion of the Jewish church, but long after it. And when they were all dead, (even St. John himself, who is said to have lived after the destruction of Jerusalem) other faithful men, to whom the dispensation of the Gospel was committed, had visible tokens of his presence in the conversion of the Gentiles. To which let me add, that as the conversion of sinners by the ministry of the word is a standing proof of the mission of our Saviour, now miracles are ceased; it being effected by a divine power attending the ordinance: so it shews that Christ is still fulfilling this promise, and will be doing so to the end of time. From whence it clearly follows, that men are still oblig'd to attend that dispensation, which Christ has engaged to accompany with his blessing.

Who those teachers are, which I call *regular*, is not now to be considered. Let it suffice to say, that as every one has a right to attend upon such a ministry as he believes qualify'd and finds useful, (tho' he differ from others in his notions about the manner of appointing men to the work) so when he does attend, he is to do it as an *humble* learner, in prospect of God's blessing, who gives the increase, whosoever plants and whosoever waters, 1 Cor. iii. 6. and may, without offence, pay a very particular respect to those whom God has made instruments of their conversion, and even call 'em *spiritual fathers*. A title which the apostle Paul did not decline, nor do

do I know that any modesty obliges other ministers to do it, tho' never so much inferior to an inspired apostle.

3. Nor does our Lord forbid a *humble reverence* for the *judgment* of *superiors*; even tho' we cannot be convinced by their arguments. This nature it self teaches, and revelation cannot forbid: If men are our superiors *merely* in *age*, there is a deference due to their judgment, tho' we cannot help differing from them; but if they are clearly superior in parts and acquisitions by close study, as well as long experience; if moreover they are men, who appear pious and devout, charitable and publick-spirited, and desirous to promote truth for the benefit of mankind, and especially for the furtherance of their eternal salvation: and if to this be added the opinion of ministers who examined their qualifications, and the call of a christian society:—in any, I say, especially in all of these cases, we are to have a respect for the judgment of others, even when it does not absolutely sway with us: for if men are modest and humble, and know any thing of themselves and the world about them, they will not indulge that pertness and self-conceit, which I fear has ruin'd many a soul, as I am sure it has broken many a church. Men of a right temper will consider the imperfection and frailty of human nature, as in themselves, as well as in others; they will not *rage* and *be confident*, as tho' they were the only men, and *wisdom should die with them*: a sense of their duty will indeed make them follow their own light; but a consciousness of their own liableness to mistake will prevent their treating others with contempt, and especially those whom (if they have any modesty) they must look upon as superior to themselves: On the contrary, finding such men to differ from them will create a virtuous diffidence of their own judgment, so far as to
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make them review their principles upon proper occasions: search further into the scriptures of truth, and pray to him for instruction, who *giveth wisdom liberally and upbraideth not*, Ja. i. 5.

4. But that which I apprehend our Lord here cautions against is, an *implicit subjection* of our *understandings* to the *dictates of others*; this homage the *pharisees* and other teachers of the law certainly affected, and the people were stupid enough to comply; they expected that the multitude should resign their understandings, and no more dispute their explication of the law than the law it self: This appears from their haughty answer to the officers whom they had sent to take Christ; *John vii. 49. Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees believed in him?* But this people, who know not the law *are cursed*, *John vii. 49.* and what they haughtily expected, the stupid people generally complimented them with; they blindly followed them, tho' into *the ditch*. The works of Christ, which were such as no man ever did, and his words, like which no man ever spake, did indeed make some impression upon this enslav'd bigotted race; but their goodness proved like that of their fathers, *as the morning cloud, and as the early dew*, *Hos. iv. 6.* Tho' they had accompany'd our Lord into the city with loud *hosannas*, and other tokens of respect; yet immediately when their artful guides exerted themselves, the poor herd (for *surely they were more stupid than any man, and had not the understanding of a man*) changed their *hosanna* into *crucify*, and prefer'd a vile murderer before him, who had healed multitudes and fed thousands; and to carry the matter as far as possible, 'tis said, *Mat. xxvii. 25. All the people answered, his blood be on us and our children.*

Against such a spirit as was in these rulers and their followers, our Lord charges *his disciples* and

the multitude: that those who were to be ministers should not affect dominion over mens faith and consciences, and that other believers should not encourage it: he would have none of his followers set up for a *Lord over his heritage*, or abet such as should affect it. *Be not ye called Rabbi*, v. 8. *neither be ye called masters*, v. 10. and *call no man your father upon the earth*.

It is not to be supposed that our Lord merely cautioned his disciples against that childish vanity of expecting *uppermost rooms*, v. 6. and *chief seats*, but had his eye principally to that which alone could support their pretences to such marks of distinction, *viz.* assuming authority over mens consciences. There is, certainly, no harm in having, tho' there be in affecting an uppermost room, or a chief seat, or a respectful salutation: but as these things had their foundation in, and gave support to spiritual tyranny, therein lay the great evil of them. Let but teachers have no dominion over conscience, and there is no great danger (as the world goes) of their being too much respected; but if they have *it*, there is scarce a possibility of reverencing them with moderation. This is therefore what our Saviour seems ultimately to aim at; and this appears from the reason he adds to his command, *One is your master, even Christ*, and *one is your Father which is in heaven*. They who understand the original languages, and the customs of the Jews, know that the words *Rabbi*, *Father*, and *Master*, refer to authoritative instruction; and that the *doctors* among them not only *had* a right to sit in *Moses* seat, but with the title of *doctor* claim'd an authority of teaching what they pleased, and expected to be believed. *vid. Grot. in loc.* "Whereas, saith that author, the disciples of Christ ought to teach the people not what they thought necessary to be observed, but only what Christ himself had pronounced

“ nounced so.” Thus the force of our Saviour’s argument seems plain. *q. d.* Do not you pretend to make laws for the people, for by your office you are ministers of God, and must keep to your commission, which is to declare *his* will, and not expect obedience to your *own*. Thus he saith, *Mat. xxviii. 20. teaching men to observe whatsoever I have commanded you: not what you fancy, but what I have commanded.* In short, one set of ministers have no right to make laws, (which comprehends both faith and order) for others; nor all the ministers upon earth for the community of Christians, or those whom they please to call the laity; for Christ is the only master of his Church, and if any man, or set of men, pretend to demand our assent to any thing as Gospel, or necessary to be believed, which Christ has not made so, we are to withstand them vehemently, and at once assert our own liberty, and our Lord’s authority.

II. To *account* for people’s giving into such a practice, &c.

Whence it is that *teachers* are inclin’d to usurp a power over mens consciences, may easily be accounted for: supposing them to be destitute of real religion, which is a very common case; common I say, for *many* will cry in that day, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity,* *Mat. vii. 22, 23.* Nothing but the true fear of God will restrain them from making the most of their spiritual calling, in a way of subserviency to their temporal interest; and it’s no wonder if men, whose heart is upon the world, and their portion in it, prostitute their character to gratify their lusts, especially their covetousness and

pride; and they are wise enough to know, that the greater sway they have over the consciences of the people, and the more they can persuade them to make *their* determinations the standard of their faith, the more easily they shall fleece and domineer over them.

But how it comes to pass that the *people* are so easily caught in this snare, deserves more particularly to be enquired into, and more distinctly represented.

1. It's owing to their ignorance; *they err, not knowing the Scriptures*. The church of Rome is so sensible of this, that the laity are forbid to converse with that book, which is the only rule to direct them in their faith and duty: their guides wisely considering, that if the common people were permitted freely to read the Bible, *their craft* would be in danger, (which is the main thing they mean, when they cry the danger of the church) for then it would appear to every man of common understanding, that the priests have no commission to preach for doctrines any thing but what Christ has commanded: Upon this account, by a very profitable equivocation, they call *ignorance the mother of devotion*, for so it is of devotion towards the priests, tho' far enough from being so towards God. If men knew that *the holy Scriptures are sufficient to make them wise unto salvation*, and that no human authority can make any thing necessary to be believed and practised which God has not determined in his word, nor dispense with one jot or tittle of what he has; and that God has no where given an intimation of his having lodged a discretionary power in the hands of fallible uninspired men, and invested them with authority judiciously and decisively to interpret his laws — if, I say, men knew this, would it be possible, that they should *call any man father* in the sense of my text! But
since

since this is too common among some who are not grossly ignorant, I must add as another cause,

2. A stupid *thoughtless disposition* in matters of *Religion*. Many have learn'd from their childhood the perfection and sufficiency of the Scriptures, and cannot properly be said to be ignorant of it, and yet resign their understandings to the usurpations of men. And the root of it is, they have not religion at their heart, and do not admit a due concern for their eternal interests. They are practically, and so really, *Atheists, Infidels* or *Idolaters*, (which is another name for worldlings) under the external badge and profession of Christianity. And tho' perhaps sometimes they may be like *Felix*, under some degree of convictions, they are not at leisure to take a proper care of their own salvation. And hence it comes to pass, that they are easily persuaded to leave *that affair* to the priest, and may without difficulty be made believe, that being good church-men, that is, conforming to the outward rites of the communion to which they belong, is not only all that is required of them in matters of faith and worship, but may moreover atone for their want of common morality. Like those of old, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, and tithed mint and rue and all manner of herbs, but passed over judgment and the love of God*, Luke xi. 42. Men who are stupidly thoughtless about real religion, the power of godliness, and *making their calling and election sure*, may be easily led as they please who happen to have the conduct of them: That is, if they have not cast off all fear of divine vengeance, and are not arrived to that degree of impiety as to make light of the *damnation of hell*. For when it comes to this, either their conduct will be different, or there must be a different way of accounting for it. But this case is not now before us.

3. Another

3. Another occasion of such management is *idleness*, or an aversion to that laborious inquiry which is necessary in searching for truth. This is the case, I believe, of some people who, otherwise, may mean well. A man who reads his Bible, must attend, consider and apply both to God and man for instruction, if he would know what is the *good* and *acceptable* and *perfect will* of his Maker. He that would find wisdom must *seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures*, Prov. ii. 14. But how few are thus disposed? therefore they give into easier methods; *i. e.* they leave it to others to judge for them, which is undoubtedly less painful than judging for ones self. They pretend difficulties, and danger of wresting the Scripture to their destruction, when the bottom is indolence and sloth. As the sluggard pretends to fear the *lion in the way*, when the truth is he loves his ease. They affect a vast reverence for their spiritual superiors, or the sanctions of lawful authority, when the main thing they really dread is taking pains. Such people had rather call a man *father* or *master*, than be at the pains to examine his commission, or contest his jurisdiction. They are something like *Iffachar*, who *saw that rest was good, and so bowed his shoulder to bear*, Gen. xlix. 25. This love of ease makes them very wisely (to use the Apostle's ironical expression, 2 Cor. xi. 19, 20.) *to suffer if a man bring them into bondage, if a man devour them, if he take of them, if he exalt himself and smite them on the face*. Referring I suppose to their false Apostle, who did not, like their true spiritual Father, renounce all pretensions to *dominion over their faith*, 2 Cor. i. 24.

4. In some people of a much better character the reason of this mean submission may be, an *excessive distrust of their own judgment*, and too great a reverence for the persons of men. These two, I think, are properly mentioned together, because they are seldom
 afunder.

asunder. It's as possible, if not so common, for men to undervalue their own capacities, as to overrate them; and to give such a preference to *men of reputation*, as is not required in that text, Rom. xii.

12. *In honour preferring one another*, nor can be warranted by any other in the word of God. I have guarded this matter already, and so I hope shall not be look'd upon as an advocate for self-conceit, but sure I may say, there is a *vicious modesty*, which some (tho' perhaps few) have a great deal of reason to unlearn. No humility can oblige a man to resign his understanding to a fallible mortal, especially when the consequence of doing it must be giving up that which ought to be of all things most dear to us, the authority of our Lord Jesus. Yet it is not every man who has that nobility or greatness of mind, for which the *Bereans* have an honourable mention in the sacred historian, who *searched the Scriptures daily*, to see if *Paul* or *Silas* did not impose upon them, *Acts* xvii. 11. And for want of such a generous temper, some people of good, yea great, abilities are almost as easily *led captive*, as the *silly women* mentioned by St. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 6. And perhaps call them *fathers*, who in comparison even with themselves are *children*.

5. Another source of this evil (and perhaps the most considerable of all) is *worldly interest*, or that *love of the world* which the Apostle represents as inconsistent with the *love of God*, 1 John ii. 14, 15. Sometimes mens whole subsistence depends upon their attachment to a party, and they are under the unhappy necessity of giving up their judgment or their livelihood. This is indeed a very compassionate case, but it too often happens. Men must *believe* or they *must not eat*. And they who feed their bodies usurp a right to cram their minds. So that he must have a very great sense of the worth of liberty and his obligation to assert it that can resist temptation

temptation and trust providence : and those brave men that dare do it deserve to be *had in everlasting remembrance*. And in this assembly it is very proper to mention with honour those confessors, who 63 years ago chose to starve (for that was the real case) rather than subscribe.

Sometimes men comply with the impositions of fallible men, to avoid the frowns of a government, or the reproach of a multitude. It's no wonder, if fines, imprisonment and banishment have great weight with flesh and blood, and turn the whole scale on the wrong side. We are not to think it strange if men wink hard, and blindly follow usurping guides, when the cry of those in power is, *Who-soever will not do the law of God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him speedily, whether it be to death or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or imprisonment*, Ezra vii. 26. Few men have christian bravery enough to follow their judgment when it leads 'em to a prison, a gallows, or a stake : Those who have, may well challenge that character of *more excellent than their neighbours*. Nor as things go, when being out of the fashion is represented as being out of the world, are we to wonder if with a great many custom sways more than judgment. And sometimes *ridicule* is a more effectual engine of persecution than *wholsome severities*. To be the jest of witlings, and the *song of the drunkard* is what many cannot submit to upon any consideration. And some men who would not be *hectored* out of their profession, will submit to be *bantered* out of it.

And in some cases men resign their own understandings that they may manage others. As it is in a tyrannical arbitrary government, the nobles are content to be slaves to their prince, that the people may be so to them. Thus it is in the *synagogue of Satan*; there is a gradation of tyranny, usurpers submit

submit to those above them, that they may with the better grace trample upon those below them; and partly with a view of lording it in their turn in a more exalted station. Whereas our *Lord* would not have his ministers lord it over his common heritage, nor affect supremacy over one another. That this instruction is no more regarded, is owing to the *things that are in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life; which are not of the Father, but of the world*, 1 John ii. 14, 15. And if it would set the matter in a stronger light, I would observe, that the same person is the *god of this world* and the *father of lies*, and often prevails over poor mortals with those arguments which he used in vain when he tempted the Son of God. *All these things will I give thee*, &c. See *Matth. 4.*

6. The last thing I shall take notice of is the *craft of seducers*. This, in concurrence with the other things I have mentioned, will account for the conduct I have endeavour'd to expose. *Pious frauds* are no new thing. And the later improvements, which have been made since the primitive times, are really prodigious. I cannot enter into the detail of the *sleights of men, and cunning craftiness wherewith they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14. Only remark in general, that *sophistical arguments* have done the business with men of some understanding, and false miracles or *lying wonders* with the credulous multitude. By these means the pretended successors of the *humble Jesus* have enslaved so great a part of *Christendom*.

III. To represent *the evil* of resigning our understanding and conscience to the dictates of fallible men; or *calling* earthly men *father*.—Here,

1. 'Tis a reproach to the *faculties* which God has given us, and the *powers* he has blest us with.

God has given us reason to direct our sentiments, and govern our conduct. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*, Prov. xx. 27. and is to be used to the purposes for which it was given. This lamp they, who implicitly resign their judgment to others, certainly *put under a bushel*, and voluntarily degrade themselves into a lower rank of beings, in a sense mingling with the beasts that perish: reserving no other use of their reason, than to answer those ends which the brutes do without it, viz. to *know their owner and their master's crib*. I may apply to this stupid passive race of men, as the prophet did to the deluded bigotted idolaters of old, *Remember this and shew your selves men*, Isa. xlvi. 28. The faculties of the soul, like the organs of the body, are given for use; and not to imploy 'em according to his design who gave 'em, is a reproach to the donor.

But beside our rational powers, as men, God has given believers his *Holy Spirit*. In their conversion *he opened their eyes and turned them from darkness to light*, Acts xxvi. 18. And was it, do we think, with this view, that as soon as they had met with a pretender to infallibility, they should shut their eyes for ever, and resign themselves blindfold to the conduct of the *church*, which is, in all such hierarchies, the more subtle and managing among the priests? He that can believe this, is ripe for *transubstantiation*, and may believe any thing else he shall be directed to swallow.

Moreover the *Spirit of truth dwells* in every true Christian, *Rom. viii.* which chapter must be notoriously wrested to exclude common believers, and confine the matters spoken of to the age of miracles, or the governors of the church. Now if all the *sons of God are led by the Spirit of God*, v. 14. is this consistent with the notion of implicit faith? is the work of that Holy Spirit which God has *promised*

mised to them that ask, only to incline us to believe and do according as men shall direct us? and such men too, as perhaps for the generality are *sensual*, *not having the Spirit*; or, if they be never so good, are really as fallible as our selves. If this mention of the work of God's Spirit be call'd *Enthusiasm*, I hope those, who are ready to throw that stone at such as they please to call *Fanatics*, will first consider that prescribed form of words which makes part of the publick service for three days successively every year, "God who as at this time

"didst teach the hearts of thy faithful

*Collect for
Whitsunday.*

"people, by the sending to them the

"light of thy Holy Spirit, *grant us by the same*

"*Spirit to have a right judgment in all things.*"

If there be found sense in this expression, as I am far from denying, there must be force in this part of the argument. Surely where God has given men reason and his Spirit too, we have something else to do with his talents, than to wrap them in a *napkin*, and be led by others at their pleasure: Or else I know not how we shall come off in our account.

2. It is an *undue exalting*, and in some sense an *idolatrous humouring of men*. We are indeed to honour *all men*; there is a respect due to human nature as such, and a preference to some particular men, upon account of the distinction which providence has made between them and the common multitude. It is therefore fit we should *give honour where honour is due*, Rom. xiii. 7. Upon this account people of quality, power and wealth are to be treated with respect: So are men of great talents and abilities, especially if regularly called to, and faithful in important trusts; those whom God in his wise providence uses as instruments in the service of mankind should be own'd and honour'd; and especially such as minister in holy things. But this may be and often is carried to a criminal excess. And surely this

is one instance of such excess, when men make their dictates, decisions, or determinations the rule of faith, or give them dominion over conscience. This is in effect to put them in *God's stead*. For he only is Lord of conscience, his mind is the standard of truth, and his will of duty. To this he only has a right; and for it he only is qualify'd. His right is not only indisputable, but inalienable: It is indefeasible, nor can a power to exercise it be delegated to any creature, because that would require infinite perfections, which cannot be communicated (as far as I see) to any finite being. As far, therefore, as we exalt man above his station or sphere, so far we intrench upon the prerogative of God, and *give his honour to another*; which his jealousy will not endure. This attribution, therefore, of infallibility (without which no man, or number of men, can pretend with any decency to have dominion over faith, or lord it over conscience,) none that duly fear God can claim, abet, or admit. Even the apostles themselves insisted upon it, that they should *be accounted of as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and this was urg'd by St. Paul with this view, that they might *not think of men above what is written*, v. 6. See also chap. iii. 5, 6, 7. The *inspired* preachers of the Gospel delivered nothing as to doctrine, or worship, or discipline, but what they *received*. They were messengers, (as the word *apostles* signifies) not legislators, sent to declare God's will, not impose their own; they had no power to add or diminish in the Gospel they were appointed to preach. Thus St. Paul saith, Gal. ii. 8. *Tho' we, or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed*. With what face then can others pretend to it? If it be said, no man pretends to make another Gospel; I only answer, he that takes upon him authoritatively to determine the sense of Scripture,

ture, or to require the subjects of Christ to admit of any thing as necessary to the management of his kingdom, which he has not injoin'd, is to all intents a law-maker, and assumes beyond what *St. Paul* durst, or any of his inspired brethren. And if uninspired teachers usurp such power without a commission to produce, we cannot abet (as we must if we allow) their being in this sense call'd *father*, without derogating from God; as it follows in this verse, *for one is your Father which is in heaven*: Nor without dishonouring his Son (whom he will have all men honour as they do the Father) *for one is our master, even Christ*.

3. It has a tendency to *introduce* those very *mischiefs* into the church, which its advocates would make us believe the scheme is calculated to prevent. Spiritual tyranny (which is the natural consequence of calling men father, &c.) is an enemy to faith and order, and even that very peace which it pretends so very much to serve.

1. 'Tis an enemy to *faith*; that is, to the doctrine of Christ; even those important truths which we are to receive, hold fast, and contend earnestly for. If we have our creed from men, and not from the Scriptures only, we are at their mercy as to our *orthodoxy*. If we must swallow their prescriptions, without being at liberty to examine the composition, we cannot be sure of fair dealing. For even in the apostles times there were *many* who did *corrupt the Word of God*, 2 Cor. ii. 17. and did not give the *sincere milk of the Word*, but made it a poisonous mixture. And if men happen to be honest, yet they are fallible, and in giving us either *milk* or *strong meat* may make very great and hazardous mistakes: not having now an infallible Spirit to guide 'em into *all truth*. And this is not only merely possible, but what we may reasonably expect: Witness the papacy, in which this interdicted,

dicted, unhallowed practice (as Mr. *How* somewhere speaks) of claiming and allowing spiritual fatherhood is arrived at full maturity. Where there is a pretended infallible judge, and men have their creeds made for them; what wood, hay and stubble have they built upon the glorious foundation of Christianity? nay, what a poisonous composition have they made of the Gospel? They have not only adulterated it with foreign mixtures, but with venomous ingredients, particularly idolatry. Idolatry, I say, for such their bread-worship must be called, till they have extirpated common sense, as well as slur'd fair reasoning, and made a jest of consulting plain revelation. For there is no argument from reason, which they have yet us'd in defence of their creature-worship, which might not serve the cause of the *philosophical*, if not *vulgar* idolaters among the heathens. Other instances I shall not mention. But there are more *hierarchies* besides the *papal*, where, tho' they do not call themselves infallible, as the papists do, (and so are less consistent than they) yet they act as if they were; and among whom every thing that is to be subscribed, as an article of faith, is far enough from being Gospel. And it is owing to the kind providence of God over his church, that wherever spiritual tyranny has taken place, the essentials of Christianity are not violated. The principles of imposition lead to it, and the ignorance and lusts of men would introduce it, if a divine superintendency did not prevent. But if the Scripture be allow'd as the only rule, and every man is to take his religion from thence, tho' there can be no absolute security against what we call unsound opinions, this is certainly the most probable method for preventing their increase: And that for this plain reason, that, there being no interest in the case, men would be open to conviction, and be under no temptation rather to wrest the Scripture than

than follow it. Whereas zeal for establishments, (and separate parties too) being connected with temporal interest, has puzzled the plainest matters in religion, beyond what could ever probably have happened, if something foreign to the Gospel had not been at bottom. *The Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation*, without human decisions: And any man of common understanding may, with proper care and ordinary helps, know as much of religious matters as is needful for him, by God's blessing on his reading the Bible; without committing himself to the conduct of any pretender to authoritative explications. Whereas spiritual tyranny has occasioned, it may be, more heresies than ever it suppress'd, or introduced something worse in their room.

But, besides, resigning our understanding to the conduct of others is an enemy to faith, upon this account, that such people may be said, properly, to have no faith at all. They *believe as the church believes*, and so your *faith stands in the wisdom of men*, and *not in the power of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 5. They receive the word *as the word of man*, *not as the word of God*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. Now, if people believe because they are bid, rather than because they are convinced; let every man judge, whether what they call faith deserves that name: and what that orthodoxy is worth, which people are led into by having mens persons in admiration. Tho' the things pretended to be believed may be divine truths, the faith is but a human faith, not having its foundation in full conviction upon proper evidence of a divine revelation. I can call nothing else true faith; and the interposition of human authority seems to hinder it rather than promote it.

2. It is an enemy to the *order* and government of christian churches. The essentials of church-government I take to be in the minister's declaring

ing Christ's will, and the peoples submitting to that will so declared, as far as they are convinc'd, in order to the edification of the body, &c. Christ has ordained a ministry which is to continue to the end of time, and has promised his presence with it. Their business is to teach the people to observe whatsoever *he* has commanded them; and Christians are to hearken unto them in the regular discharge of their duty. Ministers are to instruct and exhort, caution, rebuke, &c. the people are to give their consciences full scope to act; and if they witness to the minister that he speaks the mind of Christ, they are to confirm and comply with the declaration made, lest they be found guilty of despising Christ in despising his ministers. Farther church-power I know not. And to this, I am sure, spiritual tyranny cannot be friendly; any more than arbitrary despotic power to a free government: And that for this plain reason, that 'tis utterly inconsistent with it. When men prescribe what Christ has not commanded, or pretend to an authority he has not given, they erect, really, another kingdom, and so are far from securing the government *he* has instituted.

3. It is an enemy to *peace*; even that harmony or unity, for which it is a pretence. I do not take peace to consist in uniformity of sentiments and profession. If it could be obtained, that men had no difference in their opinions, and were really of one mind, I confess it would contribute exceedingly to the church's peace, and perhaps it may be so one day on earth; however, it will in heaven. But I do not apprehend this to be the peace which Christ bequeath'd to his church; for then his testament could not be executed. But peace is a branch of that charity or brotherly love, whereby men, who cannot think exactly alike, are disposed to differ without quarrelling, and debate without wrangling,
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and even dispute without wrath, see *Jam.* iii. 16,—18. Now this peace is the fruit of the Spirit, and not to be obtained by the carnal methods of usurpation. 'Tis certain, that implicit faith may be without charity, and I think, is an enemy to it; as men of this cast are generally fill'd with a bitter zeal against those who do not give into those sentiments which they have blindly espoused: And this wrath on one side, produceth the like on the other; and so those flames are blown and kept alive, which burn up christian charity, that *bond of perfection*. Or, if you suppose matters brought to such a pass, that there shall be no dissenter; if this be produced by human arts and usurped authority, it is not Christ's peace, but *such as the world gives*. Where men bear down all opposition, and train people up in ignorance and blindness, and call it devotion, 'tis no christian *peace*; for that is the unforced effect of reason, directed by religion: It is rather like the peace which *tyrants* give a country they have ruined. *Solitudinem faciunt, & pacem dicunt*. After the manner of a late *monarch*, who would have given peace to *Europe*, by binding it in chains. There can be nothing of true christian peace which is rational, manly, and praise-worthy, where implicit faith and its correlate spiritual tyranny are prevalent.

4. The last argument I shall offer, is that it does great *disservice to practical religion*, or true godliness; and that several ways.

1. It tends to *abate* peoples *value* for the *Scriptures*. When they imagine an authority lodg'd in *living guides*, they may be soon brought to think and speak contemptibly of the written Word as a *dead letter*, (a phrase which our modern Enthusiasts borrowed from a certain synagogue, which is justly charg'd with fanaticism as well as idolatry) and come to be much in the condition of those people,

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Matth. xv. who were taught to pay a greater regard to the traditions of men than the commandments of God. To this the doctrine of implicit faith directly leads.

2. It tends to spiritual *sloth*, and so to gross and destructive *ignorance*. The life of religion depends, as a means, upon searching the Scriptures. But if men have their creeds and canons made for 'em, it will save 'em much pains, tho' to their great loss. If the priesthood be to judge for me, it is very natural that I should say, let 'em also study and pray for me too, so as to excuse me that trouble. If they are to lead me, what need have I to look about me, or inquire my way, or pray to God to open my eyes that I may understand the Scriptures.

3. It has a tendency to encourage *formality*, and placing the main of religion in outward observances. If we allow men the ordering of our religion, they will put in their own inventions: of these they will be fonder than of God's institutions, and it will be much if they do not make us so too. And so by degrees we shall find methods of commutation, &c. to the vast prejudice of pure christian morality—Thus it is notoriously in the *Romish* church, and is there nothing of it elsewhere?

4. It will tempt men to make *worldly advantages* the chief end of religion. They profess and declare, perhaps subscribe and swear to please men, and secure secular emoluments; and so are in danger of being led on to change professions and perhaps *religions* too, as occasion serves and interest calls: and so perhaps pass from one religion to another, till they take up in atheism, or scepticism not much better. Their faith is not their own, and they regard it accordingly.

IV. To make some short *application*.

1. Let not ministers affect dominion over the consciences of their people, nor under any temptation abet the claim of the greatest of their brethren to such a power as it appears Christ has not warranted. Let 'em neither be *called masters* themselves, nor *call any man father upon earth*.

2. Let not the people encourage an unscriptural affectation of dominion in their ministers. They are highly to esteem their faithful pastors, but let 'em have a care of robbing Christ, the great Shepherd, to adorn any of his officers with the spoils. Christ's honour must be dearer to them than any thing in the world, and faithful ministers will not thank 'em for any reverence to them, which intrenches upon that which is due to their master——But abhor it rather, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* did the divine honours offer'd 'em at *Lystra*, Acts xiv.——

3. Let the Bible be the rule of all our faith and conduct, both ministers and people. A due attendance to it will secure the minister's honour, and the peoples liberty, and, in both, the Redeemer's glory.

4. Let not ministers betray any truth to humour the people. Never regarding what the people like to hear, but what Christ has commanded them to preach. Not *shunning to declare the whole counsel of God*.

5. Let not people take upon 'em to govern their teachers, or put a yoke upon their necks which they will not bear themselves. While they assert their own liberty, let 'em not abridge ministers of theirs; nor pretend to usurp that power by vote of majority, which Christ has intrusted to no community.

6. To conclude, let us all pray to God for his Holy Spirit to lead us into the ways of truth and peace; and wait for that better state of things which will be introduced at Christ's second coming; when we shall *know as we are also known*, and in the same sense love as we are also loved, when perfect light and perfect love will be the church's blessedness to all eternity. *Amen!*





The CHARGE given by Dr. Edmund Calamy to Mr. William Hunt.

ALtho' we (my dear brother) who have at this time in a publick manner been doing what in us lay, to admit you into the sacred office of the ministry, are well satisfy'd in the grounds of our own proceedings, without claiming any such despotical or dictatorial power as some in such cases have pretended to; yet I hope neither you, nor others here present, will think we take too much upon us, if we declare it to be our common opinion, that we have a sufficient warrant to offer you some suitable advice, upon so solemn and affecting an occasion. And I confess I shall be much mistaken in you, (and I believe 'twill be the same as to the rest of my brethren) if you should not readily allow me, in a case of this nature, to leave with you a few serious admonitions. But then, I can add, they are so natural, that I hope they will oft recur to your thoughts; and so agreeable to the mind and will of our common Lord, discover'd in the writings of the New Testament, that I verily think your compliance with them cannot but yield you a great deal of comfort upon reflection. I shall not, however, attempt to graft them upon any particular text of Scripture, that I may not either cramp my self in what I aim at, or be forc'd to enlarge in a way of explication: but shall take the freedom to set them before you, just as they presented themselves to my thoughts.

1. And in the first place I beseech you to be faithful. Great is that trust that we have now committed to you, which was first committed to us by those that went before us, and were as under-agents between the Head of the Church and us, in the great transaction of ordination. Now it concerns *stewards* to be found *faithful*. You, Sir, are hence forward *a steward of the mysteries of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 2. Let me beg it of you to be true to your trust. Keep that sacred *depositum* which we have now put into your hands. We have committed to you the body of revealed truth, which is to be by you dispensed, *to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. This is to be by you dispens'd in the whole course of your ministry. We durst not have intrusted you with it, if we had not thought we had had good reason to believe and hope you would be faithful in keeping this invaluable treasure. We beseech you, keep it pure and without corruption. Keep it as it is deliver'd in the sacred Records, without any change or alteration. Dispense it to all you have to do with in the name of the Lord: And take care, as far as in you lies, to transmit it entire to those that are to come after you. This is the fidelity that is requir'd of you: And this can't fail of making your future account exceeding comfortable. Be you ever so able to teach others, if you are not *faithful*, your after reckoning will be but the more dreadful. But if you'll be diligent and true to your trust, you will both *save your self and those that hear you*, 1 Tim. iv. 16.

2. Keep the end of your ministry much in your eye. And what is that, but the glory of the blessed God, in saving the souls of men? If the divine glory be of but small account with you, and the

the souls of men but little set by, give me leave to tell you, you have fix'd upon an employment, which you will find to be of all others the most uncomfortable. But if you have a due regard to both of them, 'twill help to make your work easy and pleasant, and not a little promote your usefulness in your station. Mind the end of your high and sacred office, and it will mightily assist you in the several parts of it, and help you to manage them in the manner by which that end will be most likely to be reach'd and answer'd. This will teach you how to study, and how to preach and pray; how to behave your self in your study, how in your family, how in your visits, and how in your daily converse, as well as in the pulpit. Be concern'd that *the ministry be not blam'd* upon your account, 2 Cor. vi. 2. There are many that are forward enough to reflect upon it, and make the most of every thing which they apprehend gives them an advantage for lessening and exposing it: But be you careful to *magnify your office*, Rom. xi. 13. and secure the credit of it as far as you are concern'd. Let a sincere disinterested aim at God's glory, and a desire of promoting to your utmost the spiritual and eternal good of others, run through the whole of your service. Act in every part of it, not by constraint but willingly, and with pleasure. Count your office and the work of it your honour, and no slavery or burden: and act with a ready mind and a chearful spirit, and you'll have a witness that will speak for you in the breasts of those whom you are dealing with; and be your success greater or smaller, the issue cannot be any other than comfortable to you.

3. Often remember and review this day's vows and promises. Upon this occasion, you have been stipulating with the great God, that you'll be peculiarly his; and that you'll spend your days in diligent

ligent endeavours to spread the Gospel of his dear Son. I beseech you, Sir, let no part of your sacred bonds be forgotten. All of us that are already, and that have been some time in the ministry, ought upon such occasions to be reminded of our own engagements, which we should endeavour to be answering all our days. Sacramental vows, and ordination vows, are of all others the most awful, and should therefore be frequently recollected. Think then, my dear brother, again and again, of what you have this day engag'd to, and it will spirit your endeavours in your work, and give you an holy warmth and flame in the whole of your service, which will be no small advantage both to you, and to those also whom you labour amongst.

What you have done of this kind, has not been in a corner, but, as the apostle observes in *Timothy's* case, *before many witnesses*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. All your brethren in the ministry, that have been upon the spot, and have heard what has pass'd, can attest, that you have bound your self to the several duties of your sacred function, by many solemn vows and promises. The whole christian society in which you are to spend your pains, and a great many others, whom the rumour of this day's transaction has brought into this auditory from the neighbouring parts, are witnesses of the engagements you are come under. And your own conscience is more than a thousand witnesses. Endeavour, I beseech you, to get your spirit struck with a suitable awe and dread of so important a matter, and conclude with your self, that the promises, which you have made upon this occasion, ought to be observ'd most religiously. The answers you have given to the questions that have been now propos'd to you, are plainly of the nature of vows and oaths. Often consider and recollect them, that the sense of their obliging force may be reviv'd. And wherein soever
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you fall short, be ready to judge your self, that you may not be judged of the Lord. Should you herein be perfidious, you'd have many to witness against you at the great day.

4. Be much in conversing with your own heart. It will indeed become you, to be well acquainted with your flock, and to suit your self to their circumstances: Nay, with *St. Paul* you must become *all things to all men*, that you may gain some, and edify others, *1 Cor. ix. 22.* Let those, whom you are over in the Lord, have free access to you, and all manner of encouragement from you in their application. Be free with them in all their spiritual concerns, and encourage them to use freedom with you. But at the same time you must still take care to keep up self-acquaintance, lest while you keep other mens vineyards you neglect your own. Preach first over to your self the several truths and duties, the promises and threatnings, the comforts and counsels, which you afterwards preach to others, endeavouring to feel their quickning force: And as this will be much for your own profit, so will it also make your doing good to others much the more likely.

5. Endeavour carefully to grow in knowledge, and to be still making farther and farther improvements in all valuable attainments. If this is not minded, your publick ministerial service will be but a dull and heavy repetition of the very same things over and over again, and so grow contemptible. Whereas this way, *your profiting will appear unto all*, *1 Tim. iv. 15.* you'll be the more respected, and the more likely to be successful. To be negligent in your study, will be the way to be flat and insipid in the pulpit: But if you take pains to increase your ministerial furniture, and lay in as you are laying out, you may hope to be able to *bring still out of your treasury things now and old*, *Mat. xiii. 52.*

Study the Scriptures with great diligence and application, and value an improvement in other parts of useful knowledge, in proportion as it may help to give you light with respect to the oracles of God, and make you skilful in the word of righteousness. And that you may the better understand the compass of the office which you have undertaken, and have the higher sense of the great dignity of the sacred ministry, allow me particularly to recommend four books to you, your making your self master of which, you'll find to be of constant use: And they are, *St. Chrysostom's Discourse of the Priesthood*; *Bowles's Pastor Evangelicus*; *Mr. Baxter's Gildas Salvianus, or the Reformed Pastor*; and *Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care*. They are books of a different nature and kind, and yet each of them has something in it, that you'll find to be singularly valuable and useful. And if you'll employ some of your leisure time, in improving your acquaintance with ancient *Jewish* learning, and conversing with our best *casuistical* writers, I am persuaded 'twill turn to a very good account to you. But take care that all your studies may be accompany'd with serious prayers to God, if you'd have them prosperous. That man that is averse to taking pains, has made but a very ill choice, in fixing on the ministry for the business of his life.

6. Take care to live as you preach, and to be an example to the flock. If this be not minded, you'll bid fair for pulling down with one hand, more than you build with the other. *Be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,* 1 Tim. iv. 12. Let Christ Jesus, the fount of whose name will so often be heard from your mouth, appear plainly in your manners and actions. Let his righteousness and faith, his love and peace, be particularly resplendent in you, and you'll find this the true way of edifying his

his church, and of maintaining truth, and union in it. Be assur'd, that people will be much more mindful of what you do, than what you say. If you are serious and fervent, and holy, and heavenly your self, you'll be the more likely to be helpful to make others so too : But if you are vain and frothy, light and dissolute, and carnally minded, it is not to be expected you should do religion any service, or train up others for heaven. Or if God should make any use of you in that respect, it cannot avail you any thing; since *when you have preach'd to others*, you your self must (as the apostle has express'd it) prove *a castaway*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. than which nothing could be mention'd that is more dreadful.

7. Let no part of your duty be neglected, towards those that are committed to your more immediate care. Let none of the flock be overlook'd. Feed both the sheep and the lambs of Christ. Deal with them both in publick and in private, in order to the good of their immortal souls. Do your utmost, to instruct the ignorant, reduce the wandring, awaken the negligent and secure, and comfort afflicted consciences and troubled spirits. *Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine*, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Watch against error: And let not so much as any single member of the church perish through your neglect or default. Act as one that *watches for the souls* of those amongst whom you are call'd to spend your pains, Heb. xiii. 17. Give milk to babes in Christ, and stronger meat to such as you find able to bear it, and the oracles of the living God to all without exception. Entertain your flock from time to time, not with the inventions of human subtilty, or the follies of curiosity, which at best can only tickle their ears, and please their fancies, but with the pure word of God, which

is the true food of souls, that alone is able to nourish them unto eternal life. Do but take care of this, and whatever it is as to others, you will not have the blood of souls to answer for.

8. Watch assiduously against surrounding snares and temptations. None are more expos'd than Ministers. The world hates them, because it hates him that employs them, and gives them their commission, and the work which he has set them about. The Devil owes them a peculiar spite, and triumphs in nothing more than in their weaknesses, failures, and miscarriages. Since you are not ignorant of his devices, I beseech you to endeavour to be suitably prepar'd. He'll assault you by friends and by enemies; and 'tis hard to say which are more dangerous, the caresses of the one, or the wounds of the other. He'll assault you within and without. Be prepar'd to resist him every way. Take particular heed of giving way to temptations, to pride and uncharitableness; to sloth, sensuality and worldliness. Whenever you are assaulted, fly to Christ for help and strength. Live by faith on him; and you'll find his grace sufficient for you. Carefully renounce worldly lusts of all sorts, and cherish no other passion but a love of true holiness, in all the parts and branches of it. Let it be your earnest endeavour, that the faith of Christ Jesus, and the hope of his heaven which he has purchas'd and promis'd, and the love of his house, and concern for his honour, may quell and keep down sensual emotions. And never, as long as you carry flesh about you, think your self so safe, or so much out of danger, as not to need to be upon your guard.

9. Forget not always to keep a good conscience. Let nothing prevail with you in any case to strain or force it, or go against its dictates. Keep it well enlighten'd and tender, pure and clean, and it will help to keep you easy and chearful. Of all persons living,

living, none are more concern'd, to keep consciences void of offence, towards God and towards men, than ministers. If they ever make shipwreck of a good conscience, their faith can be but of little worth: If they grow unsavoury salt, there is but little hope of their ever being season'd again, or of their being of any great use towards the seasoning of others.

10. Be circumspect. Remember, *the wise man's eyes are in his head*, Eccles. ii. 14. and they are there for use, and not barely for shew or ornament. Take heed of rashness and precipitance, *Do nothing by partiality*, 1 Tim. v. 21. Be prudent in your carriage, both to those of the flock, and such as are without. However let not your prudence degenerate into craft, but manage your self *with simplicity and godly sincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. Endeavour to carry it so to those of the *establish'd church*, as that they may see that your dissent from them is out of conscience, and not out of meer humour. And whereas among those who dissent from the national establishment, there are different schemes and notions, as well as denominations, let me recommend it to you, to carry it so, as that *your moderation may be known unto all men*, Phil. iv. 12. Tho' it would but very ill become such an one as you, to encourage illiterate tradesmen in their pretensions to the ministry, who venture upon work to which it is plain that God has never call'd them, because he has not qualify'd them for it; or to give countenance to the spreaders of any notions that tend to turn the grace of God into wantonness, or to build up those works of the devil which our blessed Lord Jesus came into the world to destroy: Yet when you make opposition, and think it your duty so to do, take care to oppose with the meekness of wisdom; remembering that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, Jam. i. 20.

11. Be modest. Remember you are young: It will therefore be your wisdom to carry it so, as that none may *despise your youth*, 1 Tim. iv. 12. Taking much upon you, and being positive and dogmatical, will rather provoke to that, than prevent it. Gaining a stock of experience must be a work of time. And yet I am fully satisfy'd, you may be sufficiently humble and free from assuming, without being servile or mean-spirited, which is a thing that would most certainly expose and lessen you, instead of recommending you to persons of any judgment, or doing any thing to promote your real usefulness.

12. Be patient. Be not surpriz'd, neither think any strange thing happens to you, if some that you expect kindness from, should be so far from answering your expectations, as to prove unkind to you. Do what you can to fortify your self, that you may be able to bear slights, without being depriv'd of the enjoyment of your self, or diverted from your Duty. *Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 3.

13. Study peace. *If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men*, Rom xii. 18. But then don't stand up and appear for bare peace, but for peace with all its scriptural concomitants. Be for peace and truth; peace and holiness; peace and steadfastness. *Above all things, put on charity*, Coloss. iii. 14. The more you regret the want of that in others, (and who is there that does not often see occasion for it!) be the more careful to excell in it your self; and never think that their faults will excuse yours. Avoid extremes. Encourage no prejudices in your self or others. Carefully watch against groundless jealousies and suspicions. Do what you can to prevent divisions. Rather suffer wrong from others, than do it to them. Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but endeavour to overcome evil with good. *Note not about questions,*

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and strifes of words, 1 Tim. vi. 4. But in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, 2 Tim. ii. 25.

14. Be publick spirited. Avoid selfishness, and a narrow mind. Endeavour to get your heart enlarg'd, with respect to all the real concerns of Christ's kingdom: But then endeavour to be your self, and to make others sensible, that *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv. 17.

Take heed, my brother, of *lording it over God's heritage*, 1 Pet. v. 3. To attempt it is both unscriptural and irrational, and 'tis what the age will not bear. Rather study to be as punctual as may be in your duty, than to extend your Power: And do all that in you lies to convince those you are dealing with, that their real benefit and edification, is the thing at which you are aiming.

And finally; wheresoever duty is plain, be not dishearten'd at any consequences that may attend the faithful discharge of it. Be of good courage, and faint not. *Be strong in the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. Tho' you should meet with discouragements, (and you must not expect to be wholly free from them,) yet let not your spirit sink. Remember your Master's eye is upon you, and let that animate you. If you have but his approbation, no slights or censures of others need give you any disturbance. But after all, you should look for your chief reward above. While you continue labouring here below, you must expect (as has been the lot of those that are gone before you) to go through bad report as well as good, and to have a mixture of foul weather with fair: But hold on in a steady and regular course of duty, and your crown at the last shall be weighty. *Turning men now to*
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righteousness, Dan. xii. 3. or doing your endeavours in order to it, you shall at length come to *shine among the stars for ever and ever*; and as the apostle has express'd it, *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall have a crown of glory*, 1 Pet. v. 4. that fadeth not away. And happy they that shall obtain it!



The



*The EXHORTATION given to the
People, by Mr. John Troughton.*

Beloved in our Lord,

I Am, at your desire, to close the solemnity of this day, by giving you a word of exhortation. As your own request hath drawn it from me, I promise my self that it will meet with a suitable disposition of spirit in you, and that you will bear with that freedom which you will find in it. But I may with the greater boldness bespeak your attention and regard, when I tell you, that tho' I may use great plainness of speech, yet I shall speak only the words of truth and soberness to you : nothing but what Jesus Christ himself, to whom you all profess subjection, has warranted and enjoined to you. The New Testament, which is more especially the law of Christ, who is the King and Head of the Church, and the chief Shepherd of the flock ; as it has prescribed rules to ministers for their conduct in every part of their ministry, and pressed upon them the faithful and conscientious discharge of their duty : so it hath given rules too for the conduct of people towards their ministers, and hath pressed the observation of them. And the truth is, ministers have as much reason to expect a suitable conduct from their people, as the people have to expect it from them. There is an equal obligation on both sides.

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You.

You have heard your minister's duty faithfully represented to him, and his obligations to discharge it inforced upon him; and now let me intreat your attention unto your own, which I shall set before you with all the clearness and brevity I can.

I shall cast my discourse into the following method.

1. Give you some more general hints of your duty.

2. Consider your duty with relation to the several parts of the ministerial office, which he is to execute towards you.

3. And then recommend some things to you, which are incumbent upon you with respect to each other, as members of the same society.

Suffer me, in the *first place*, to give you some general hints of your duty, in the following instances.

Let him be in high esteem with you. He has been now set apart to the work of the ministry, and devoted himself to it, your eyes seeing it; he is now become an authorized minister of Jesus Christ. Consider him as such, and let it conciliate an esteem of him. There is an esteem due to all the ministers of Christ, as they are his ambassadors; as they come with his commission, and act in his name. But there is a special regard due from persons to their own minister, who is over them in the Lord. He ought to have the chiefest interest in their affections. Who can have so good a right to them, as he whose labours are wholly devoted to their service? It is an act of justice and equity. *I beseech you*, says the apostle, *1 Thess. v. 12, 13. to know them that labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord.* That is, to know them in a way of eminency, and distinction; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. We find, indeed, the Scriptures censuring an undue admiration of particular persons: but yet this still stands good as an undoubted truth;

truth; that there ought to be a particular regard had by people to their own minister, and especially when he is one that honours his character. This I would press upon you, not only as a matter of equity, but as that which will be no small encouragement to him. How chearfully may a minister go on in his work, when he has good proof of the affections of his people? It will give life to his labour, and a comfortable prospect too of doing good by them. Where esteem is wanting, one of his greatest encouragements will be wanting. He will be like one that strives against the stream. All his ministerial performances will be treated with indifference, if not with contempt, how deserving soever they may really be.

You must pray for him, and that earnestly and constantly. You must *strive in your prayers to God for him*, as the apostle expresseth it, *Rom. xv. 30.* He must pray for himself, and he must pray for you; and you must also pray for him. He will in the discharge of his office need the prayers of all of you. You cannot seriously consider the extent of his work, the difficulties and discouragements which he is likely to encounter with in it, and the variety of temptations which he will be incident to, but you must needs be sensible that he will need your prayers. You find the great apostle *St. Paul* desiring an interest in the prayers of those whom he writes to. In thus frequently intimating his desires of them, he plainly points out how great a duty, and how necessary a piece of respect to ministers, praying for them is. In your praying for him you will not only perform a duty, and shew your respect to and concern for him, but you will manifest your concern for the interest of Christ amongst you. Those that do not pray for their ministers, cannot have the interest of Christ at heart as they should have. Give me leave to add, that

by praying for him, you will profit your selves. The more earnest and constant you are in your supplications to the divine Majesty for him, the better will he be furnished, and the more effectually will he be assisted; his heart and his hands will be more strengthened, and that will redound to your greater advantage. He will come to you with a greater fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace, as the apostle expresseth it concerning himself. You cannot be negligent of praying for him without injuring your selves.

Another duty incumbent upon you is maintenance and support. By which I mean not a bare maintenance, nor barely your allowance of what is just necessary for his subsistence; but such a maintenance as is sufficient to secure his ministry from contempt, and may be, in some measure, to the credit of it. You ought so far to support him, as that he may live both comfortably and reputably. The law of Christ insists very plainly and positively upon it, and frequently too. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things,* Gal. vi. 6. It is observable, that there is not only a positive command for it; but it is insisted on as matter of equity and common justice. See how the apostle reasons upon this head, 1 Cor. ix. 7. and onwards. *Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope. Do ye not know that they*

they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they that wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath God ordained, that those that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. It is observable what ample provisions God made for those that served at the altar under the law. And 'tis no less worthy of observation, how he speaks of those who withheld their appointed maintenance from them: he calls it a *robbing him*. It is not absolutely determined in the Gospel in what way ministers shall be supported, but this is as certain as any thing can be, that they ought to have a liberal maintenance. A minister, indeed, ought to expect his recompence chiefly from the Master whom he serves; but he may in justice expect it too from those who receive the benefit of his labours. Our blessed Lord tells you, that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*. Consider but the reason and equity of the thing, and you cannot be backward. Some think it a great matter, if they allow a little, and that a minister is very much beholding to them for it. But surely such have very little considered the law of Christ, and must be acted by a very poor and narrow spirit. Let it be considered, that a minister ought to be liberally supported, not only in point of equity, that he may be encouraged, and live with some reputation in the world; but it ought to be done, that he may be the better enabled to discharge some other duties which are incumbent upon him. He must be given to hospitality. He must be an example to others of charity. He must lay up for his children, &c. And how can he answer these obligations, if he is put off with a short allowance? It is an observation which I have made of some persons, that they think if a minister lives a little above the vulgar rate, he lives too well. It is certain, that self-denial and mortification are things which are incumbent upon

upon persons of such a character above all others. They ought above all persons to be free from luxury, and pomp, and worldly grandeur : but this will not at all justify the straitness and stinginess of those that enjoy their labours. But I would hope that I need not insist further upon this head to you. You have so distinguished yourselves by your regards to a regular ministry, that I believe it will not be necessary.

You must be very tender of his reputation, and endeavour to vindicate and defend it by all just and proper methods. A minister's usefulness depends upon his reputation ; when that is stained, it will be very much at an end. As he must on the one hand endeavour to keep his own reputation as unspotted as may be ; so must you on the other hand be very careful of it. Ministers are the chief instruments of beating down the kingdom of the Devil, and he owes them therefore a peculiar grudge, and will use all methods to blast their success. And one common method which he takes, is to employ slanderous tongues to sully their reputation. It must concern their people therefore to be very tender of it, and to defend it as far as they justly can. Ministers are men of the like passions with others. They are no more perfect than others are. They may have their indiscretions and failings as well as others. Every thing in their conduct may not be unblamable ; an allowance should be made for common frailties. They should not be unduly aggravated and censured, nor should they be exposed. As ministers must be patient and gentle, and not bear hard upon their people upon the account of tolerable miscarriages ; so ought they to be gentle towards their ministers upon the same account. Take heed of receiving and hearkening to slanderous reports, and most of all of spreading them. It is very hard and unkind, when those who are of his own charge shall play

play the critic, when they shall act the part of a spy, to observe every failure, that they may have matter of reproach ; when they shall be some of the first in raising and spreading reports to defame him. Persons, that so act, do not consider what service they do the Devil, and what disservice they do to the interest of religion. Alas ! there are enough of those that are without to spy faults, and that are forward to report and defame : their own people need not do it. If any thing be really blameworthy in a minister's conduct, the best and most christian way will be to represent it to himself. There is no conscientious minister but will take it as an act of friendship. There is this further needful caution which one might subjoin to this head, *viz.* That people do not upon every trifling occasion break off from the ministrations of their ministers. This is giving as great a wound to their reputation, as any they can give.

Spare me one word more upon this general head, which is this : That you would heartily endeavour in your several stations and capacities to further the ends of his ministry amongst you. You may and you ought in your sphere so to do, and to contribute what you can to the success thereof. There is a great deal of reason to think, that our ministrations would be more abundantly successful, and we should see more of the fruits of them, if our people were suitably diligent in their stations. Our want of success may, in a great measure, be imputed to their neglects. I am not pressing you to any thing, that is an invasion of the ministerial Office. It is certain, that they are the wisest and the best Christians, who keep within their own province. But yet a great deal may be done by you to attain those ends. Let me just hint at a few things. You may repeat sermons in your own families, and press what they have heard upon the consciences of those
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that are under your charge. You may require an account from them of what they have heard. You may pray that the word which they have heard may have a good effect upon them. You may instruct and admonish, and warn them without confining yourselves to what they have heard. You may exhort them according to the ability which God hath given you, both on the Lord's day, and at other proper and convenient seasons. Every master of a family should be a prophet and a priest to his own family: and he cannot acquit himself with faithfulness in the relation in which he stands to it, without being so. Thus you may, and thus you should further the ends of his ministry. Thus you may, and thus you should be helpers together with him. If you have been wanting therein, let it be reformed. If you are really desirous that he should do good amongst you, it will quicken you to a diligent and serious practice of these things.

Proceed we next to give you some more particular directions with respect to the duty, with regard to the various parts of the ministerial office, which he is to exercise among you.

He is to preach the word to you; to give constant attendance thereunto, as that which stands first in the ministerial commission. He must be instant in season, and out of season: and you must hear. The same command which obligeth him to preach often, obligeth you to hear often. No opportunity of attendance upon the word preached ought to be omitted, but when an invincible necessity of being absent lies upon you. You can no more justify an omission of an opportunity of hearing, when it offers itself to you, than he can excuse an omission of preaching. If he has no just impediment, let him have no cause to complain that you are slack in attending. Let not your seats be empty at any time without reason. You ought to be swift

to hear, that is, always ready to it. Consider that if you should be slack in hearing, you will not only be guilty of an omission of one of the greatest duties of religion; of an insultation of Christ, which he has put so great an honour upon: but it will be a great discouragement to him: it must needs grate very much upon his spirit to think, that he hath taken a great deal of pains in studying for you, and preaching to you, and you will not vouchsafe him the hearing. I take the liberty of pressing this more warmly and closely upon you, because as far as my observation has reached, the neglect of it is very much complained of. As you value the command of your Saviour and Lord, and your minister's comfort, let there not be a coldness and indifferency amongst any of you herein.

You will not think it foreign to this matter, or a needless digression, if I suggest something to you as to the manner of hearing. As Jesus Christ, whose word you hear, hath laid the main stress upon the manner of hearing, so you will therein pay a greater respect to your minister. You must hear with seriousness and reverence. You must attend in hearing. You must hear with a teachable and submissive temper of spirit. Do not hear as judges, but with a desire to learn and profit. You must hear so as to receive the truth in the love of it. Let me caution you against one very common fault in hearing, which is captiousness. There are too many who, either through ignorance or self-conceit, are very apt to be captious, and to find fault. It shews a very ill spirit where it is so; and must needs give a great deal of uneasiness to a minister. Let not any thing of this nature be found amongst you. People indeed are not to give an implicit faith to every thing that a minister says: They are not obliged to take every thing upon trust: but should compare every thing that he preacheth to them with

the Scriptures, which are the only rule of faith and touchstone of truth. You know who they were who were commended for searching the Scriptures, to know the truth of those things which were preached to them. But this you may do, and yet be free from a captious spirit. If you hear any thing which you do not well understand, any thing which at the first hearing you may not apprehend to be so agreeable to the truth, do not censure, but let it be your desire that he would give you satisfaction, and clear it up to you. Those, who are acted by a spirit of candour and charity, will do so. Leave the contrary spirit to those poor empty creatures, who would be thought to be wiser than others, and their ministers too; and who are the plagues of the congregations where they are.

You must be obedient to the word which you hear. *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only. To obey them which have the rule over you* is the apostle's direction and charge, *Heb. xiii. 17.* So far as what he preacheth is agreeable to the word of God, you must look upon your selves as obliged in conscience to obey; for in so doing you obey Christ, and manifest your subjection to him. A blind obedience indeed is no more due to ministers than an implicit faith. But when a minister keeps within the compass of his commission, teaching his people to observe only those things which Christ hath commanded, he is to be obey'd without reserve; and those that are not herein obedient, are disobedient to Christ himself. *Let your fruitfulness be abundant, and your profiting appear to all.* As you will herein honour the Gospel which you hear, so you will be a comfort and a credit to him. Nothing can tend more to the encouragement and comfort of a minister than fruitful hearers, and the seeing his people having a strict regard to the laws of Christ; To see them walking in truth and holiness.

ness. This will be the best recompence of his labours which they can give him ; and nothing can be more discouraging than the contrary. For a minister to wear himself out with study and preaching, and to see little or no fruit of it, must needs very much sadden his spirit, and weaken his hands. If he meets not with the success which he desires, he may, indeed, comfort himself with this, that he shall not lose his reward from the Master whom he serveth : He rewards, not according to success, but according to diligence and faithfulness. But yet the unfruitfulness of his hearers cannot but be a great affliction to him. Let not your unfruitfulness lay him under a temptation to repent of his engaging in the work of this day. Let him have occasion to say with the apostle, *2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. Ye are our epistle read and known of all men, manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministred by him.* It were to be wished, that you, and all the congregations committed to our charge, would be so exemplary for knowledge, for faith, for love to God and man, for humility, self-denial, meekness, heavenly-mindedness, peaceableness, for the good order and government of your families ; that we may be able to make our boast of you ; but above all, that we may give an account of you with joy. It is not a little encouraging, when our ministerial performances are to acceptance with our people ; but it will be a far greater encouragement to us, and commendation of them, when their fruitfulness is manifest to all.

He is, further, to administer the seals of the covenant to you, those wise and gracious institutions of Christ. He is often to administer the Lord's supper especially, that standing memorial of the death of Christ, and the means whereby we have communion with him in it. And this sacred institution must be frequently observed by you. As

your seats should not be empty when the word is preached, so neither should they be vacant when the other is to be celebrated. Let him find a ready and willing compliance in you herein. Let those of you who have submitted to it, be constant in observing it. And let those of you who have not yet submitted to it, submit to it with all convenient speed. Honour your Saviour and Lord, and honour your minister, by your frequent meeting them at that solemnity. It is a shame for those who are advanced in years not to have done it. It may be justly wondered at, how they can neglect it with any satisfaction to their own consciences. How discouraging is such a neglect to a minister, as well as a contempt of the wisdom, authority, and love of Christ? And what an ill example does it give to young ones! will not they be tempted to think, that their obligations are not so great as they are, when they see an indifferency in those that should be exemplary to them, and encourage them? One cannot forbear pressing this upon you with some warmth. Sure I am, you can give no just reason for your neglect. Is it a small matter to neglect that, as to which the will of Christ is so plain and positive? Is it a small matter to omit that, in the observing of which, you will as much as any way shew your love to Christ, and manifest your subjection to him? Let me address this part of the exhortation to young ones likewise: I mean to those of this sort who are arrived to years of discretion and understanding: Be not backward to renew your covenant with God and your Saviour. Come and join your selves to the Lord, and subscribe with your hearts and your hands unto your God. Come and put in your claim to the blessings of the covenant, and engage your selves to fulfil the terms of it. Come and submit to the yoke of Christ, and put your selves under the

the teachings and conduct of his Spirit. Come, that you may be strengthened and fortify'd against the snares and temptations of the world, which will assault you most strongly in your youthful age : that it may be well with you in time and to eternity. But I must not inlarge, tho' one can hardly tell how to restrain one's self upon this head. Were not complaints in this respect so general, there would have been less occasion to say so much.

But further, he is to exercise that discipline amongst you which Jesus Christ hath appointed, upon account of that pastoral relation which he now stands in to you ; that discipline which Christ has instituted must not be neglected by him. To exercise this aright, to exercise it so as to answer his obligations to Christ, and his own conscience, will require a great deal of skill and prudence, and patience in him. It is one of the most difficult parts of a minister's work, and which they are under the strongest temptations to be remiss in. It is a work that is not very grateful, and which he would be the most willingly excused from, if faithfulness to Christ and the souls of men would allow him. This discipline, in some of the most material parts of it, consists in watching over the people committed to his charge, which is the foundation of all the rest. In private warnings and admonitions : In reproofing all disorderly practices ; every thing which they observe in them to be contrary to the Gospel rule, and that conscientious walking which professing Christians should be exemplary in : In endeavouring to recover backsliders out of the snare of the devil, and to restore them again. Do you submit to the discipline of Christ, let him not meet with any opposition from you herein. Be not touchy, or stubborn and refractory. Let warnings, and admonitions, and reproofs be well taken by you ; let them be regarded by you as instances of his faithfulness, and considered

red as design'd for the good of your souls. In submitting to ministerial discipline you submit to Christ who has appointed it; and it will be profitable to your selves. If it be received patiently by you, and hath a good effect upon you, you will value it as an instance of kindness and faithfulness, and will be thankful for it. The treating such dealings with resentment, as it is a sign of a very bad spirit in those that do it, so it is one of the greatest trials that a minister can meet with. It is the way of too many to be very impatient under such dealings, and to lose all respect for those that are thus faithful to them. And sometimes they will carry it so far as to desert them, and walk no more with them, nay even to abuse them. But it hath been often observed, that persons of such a temper have been the visible monuments of the divine displeasure. They have been either given up to hardness of heart, and to walk after their own lusts; or have been blasted in their outward man. And sometimes God has manifested his displeasure against them both these ways.

We propos'd in the last place, to recommend some things to you, which are incumbent upon you with respect to one another, as members of the same society. And suffer therefore the word of exhortation in this respect also. I would the rather recommend these things to you, because a great deal of your minister's comfort, and of your own too, will depend upon the practice of them. They are the commands of Christ, and therefore ought to be regarded by you.

Receive ye one another. Own each other as fellow Christians, and members of the same body, notwithstanding any disagreement which may be amongst you in matters of lesser moment. Disown none but those whom you have just reason to think that Christ disowns. Refuse to own none that you may,

may, in a judgment of a charity, hope have the marks of the members of Christ upon them.

Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Walk in love, and be always at peace amongst yourselves. Let there be an entire harmony amongst you, and no divisions upon any account.

Pray with and for each other. Be assisting to one another as much as you can this way. You all need each others prayers, and therefore be not wanting in being helpful to each other therein.

Exhort one another, and thereby endeavour to encourage and edify each other. This is as frequently enjoined as any thing. *Exhort one another daily, whilst it is called to day,* says the apostle, *Heb. iii. 13.* so chap. x. 24. *Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; exhorting one another.*

Bear ye one another's burdens. Bear with common frailties, and infirmities in each other; do not censure and aggravate. And endeavour to support and encourage each other under your trials and afflictions. Make the case of each other your own as much as you can; that you may not be wanting in mutual supports and consolation.

Watch over one another for good. Watch over each other in order to prevent miscarriages, as much as may be. One may see the snares, and temptations, and dangers that his brother is exposed to, more than he may see them himself; and watchfulness therefore is very necessary. It is necessary to your brother's personal good, and likewise for the honour and credit of religion.

Admonish and reprove each other with a spirit of meekness, whenever there is occasion. Do not suffer sin upon each other. And take it as a christian and friendly part from each other, whenever it is done.

Rejoice in each other's welfare both spiritual and temporal. Let there be no appearances of an envi-

ous and repining spirit amongst you, but account each other's welfare as your own.

These are hints of some of the principal things which are incumbent upon you, which you must conform to in obedience to the command of Christ. Thus act and thus walk ; and the God of love and peace shall be always with you.

I cannot better close than with the words of the apostle, *Heb. xiii. 20, 21.* which I shall leave with you. *The God of peace, which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight : To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

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